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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR, CA/FPP FOR CHERIE LOMBARDI

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TAGS: CVIS CMGT DR SMIG KFRD ETRD
SUBJECT: DOMINICAN VALIDATION STUDY REVEALS LOW
NON-IMMIGRANT VISA OVERSTAY RATE

¶1.   SUMMARY: Results of a completed validation study for the
Dominican Republic suggest that three (3) to five (5) percent
of Embassy's recently issued B1/B2 visa holders remain in the
United States beyond the six months normally authorized under
their visa classification. The study included approximately
900 randomly-selected recipients of B1/B2 visas issued at
Embassy between September 2004 and September 2005. Officers
tracked the selected applicants, whereabouts using phone
calls, USG entry and exit records (drawn from the NAILS and
IDENT systems), Dominican government entry and exit records,
and local credit reports. Applicants were sorted in a
database by a wide range of characteristics, of which age,
marital status, number of children, and prior travel history
appeared to most strongly influence overstay rates. Results
are elaborated below in paras 5-14, while conclusions from
the data are drawn in paras 15-17.   END SUMMARY

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METHODOLOGY
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¶2.   Embassy has completed a large-scale validation study
designed to assess overstay rates, and how these vary based
on applicants' personal characteristics. The approximately
nine hundred applicants included in the survey were selected
in accordance with FPP guidance using the random number
feature in Microsoft Excel. They were first contacted
telephonically between April and June 2006 at their places of
work and residences using the phone numbers listed on their
forms DS-156. Those who could not be contacted and those
whom callers suspected (based on phone conversations) of
overstay were queried in both USG and Dominican immigration
databases, as well as through a Dominican credit agency,
further reducing the proportion of those whose whereabouts
could not be determined.

¶3.   Based on the data gleaned using the methods above,
Embassy divided applicants into four groups:

a. No Evidence of Overstay: This group includes those visa
holders whom Embassy was able to contact telephonically,
along with those whose exits from the United States have been
confirmed by one of the databases listed above. It also
includes those applicants who have been in the United States
for less than six months.

b. Confirmed Overstay: This group includes those the
location methods above have confirmed as being in the United
States beyond the six months initially authorized to holders

of B1/B2 visas.

c. Suspected Overstay: Records exist verifying that these applicants entered the United States at some point over six months ago, but no exits from the country have been recorded. FPU callers were unable to contact them – numbers had been disconnected or colleagues reported they had disappeared.

d. Unable to Determine Travel History: The few applicants listed in this category suffered from a rare confluence of factors - they could not be contacted and their entry/exit records were incomplete in at least two of the three databases. Every effort was made to minimize the number of applicants placed in this group.

¶4. Embassy sorted applicants based on personal characteristics in order to attempt to determine what makes an applicant more likely to remain in the United States on his/her B1/B2 visa. A database to store information on the 900 selected applicants was created for this purpose. Much of the data (including age, gender, prior travel history, destination, and adjudicating officer) was already on file and could be exported automatically from the Ad Hoc Reporting Database (ART). Other personal characteristics (e.g. salary, marital status, number of children, and purpose of travel) were identified based on information entered into the applicants' case remarks at the time of the interview (Embassy's NIV adjudicating officers enter case remarks for all applicants, refused or issued).

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RESULTS
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¶5. The location of 95% of selected visa recipients could be confirmed. Of these, 3-5% appeared to have remained in the United States beyond the six months authorized under their visa classification. Overall results are outlined below:

No evidence of overstay:	833	95.0%
Confirmed overstay:	28	3.2%
Suspected overstay:	14	1.6%
Unable to determine:	2	0.2%

¶6. Overstay rates are broken down by selected personal characteristics in the following sections. Note that in the charts, which primarily look at proportions, the number of visa recipients within a particular category is listed in parentheses in the line immediately below the category name. Analysis of the results is provided immediately after some charts. Status codes are broken down as follows:

A = No evidence of overstay
B = Confirmed overstay
C = Suspected overstay
D = Unable to determine travel history

¶7. RETURN STATISTICS BY MARITAL STATUS:

	A	B	C	D
Single (76)	86.8%	11.8%	1.3%	–
Married (308)	93.8%	3.9%	1.0%	0.3%
Divorced (19)	84.2%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%
Separated (6)	83.3%	16.7%	–	–
Common Law (12)	100.0%	–	–	–

Widowed (12)	100.0%	-	-	-
Not Provided (243)	97.1%	1.6%	1.2%	-

¶8. RETURN STATISTICS BY AGE:

Age	A	B	C	D
0-17 (195)	96.4%	0.5%	3.1%	-
18-21 (29)	89.7%	6.9%	3.4%	-
22-25 (46)	87.0%	10.9%	2.2%	-
26-35 (190)	94.7%	4.2%	1.1%	-
36-45 (148)	95.4%	4.1%	0.7%	-
46-55 (105)	96.2%	1.9%	1.0%	1.0%
56-69 (122)	96.7%	2.5%	-	0.8%
70 (42)	92.9%	2.4%	4.8%	-

COMMENT: Older applicants (46 years old), along with minor
children, appeared least likely to overstay their visas,
while young adults (18-25 years old) were those most likely
to do so. Among young adults, there was a wide disparity
between the behavior of those who had had previous visas and
those who were first-time applicants - see para 16 for more

information.

¶9. RETURN STATISTICS BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN:

# of Children	A	B	C	D
0 (88)	89.8%	8.0%	2.3%	-
1-2 (141)	95.0%	2.8%	1.4%	0.7%
3-4 (122)	92.6%	6.6%	-	0.8%
5 (57)	96.5%	1.8%	1.8%	-
Not Provided (346)	96.5%	2.0%	1.4%	-

OBSERVATIONS: Applicants with five or more children appeared
to present the lowest overstay rate.

¶10. RETURN STATISTICS BY PRIOR US TRAVEL:

	A	B	C	D
1st Time* (446)	90.4%	4.7%	3.1%	1.8%
Reval* (431)	96.3%	1.4%	0.7%	1.6%

"1st Time" issuances include those who have not had valid
visas within the last ten years (since 1996).

"Reval" issuances include those who have been issued U.S.
nonimmigrant visas, regardless of their classification or
duration, within the last ten years (since 1996).

¶11. RETURN STATISTICS BY PRIOR US TRAVEL, AGES 17-24 ONLY

	A	B	C	D
1st Time*	82.4%	14.7%	2.9%	-
(34)				
Reval*	97.7%	2.3%	-	-
(43)				

OBSERVATIONS: Applicants who have never had visas are
considerably more likely than those who have to overstay
their visas.

¶12. VALIDITY OF VISA:

There are two parts to this section. The first considers the
duration of the issued visa - i.e., how long the visa will be
valid before it expires. "Full validity" is defined as ten
years for adults and five years for minor children. The
second section looks at the number of entries allowed under
the issued visa. In other words, is the visa valid for only
a single visit, or can it be used to make multiple trips to
the United States?

   a. RETURN STATISTICS BY DURATION OF ISSUED VISA:

Validity	A	B	C	D
Full	97.7%	1.3%	0.8%	0.2%
(607)				
Limited	88.9%	7.4%	3.3%	0.4%
(270)				

   b. RETURN STATISTICS BY NUMBER OF ENTRIES PERMITTED ON
ISSUED VISA:

# of Entries	A	B	C	D
1-Entry	89.4%	8.5%	2.1%	-
(94)				
Multiple	95.6%	2.6%	1.5%	0.3%
(780)				

OBSERVATIONS: These results clearly indicate that when
officers elect to limit a visa's validity, their concerns are
sometimes justified. Consider, for example, that 20 of the
28 confirmed overstays had been the recipients of
limited-validity visas.

¶13. RETURN STATISTICS BY STATE OF DESTINATION:

Applicants' states of destination were determined based on
the area codes of the phone numbers corresponding to their
destinations in the United States. This data had been
provided by the applicants on their forms DS-156, and entered
into the NIV system by FSNs at the time of their interviews.

Note that the chart includes only the 597 visa holders for
whom U.S. contact phone numbers were available.

Destination	A	B	C	D

Florida (155)	92.9%	5.2%	0.6%	1.3%
New Jersey (75)	92.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%
New York (205)	92.7%	2.0%	2.9%	2.4%
Puerto Rico (55)	92.7%	1.8%	3.6%	1.8%
Other State (107)	90.7%	5.6%	3.7%	-

OBSERVATIONS: There is no evidence of a correlation between
a visa applicant's stated destination and his or her
likelihood of overstaying their visa. Applicants traveling
to states known for large Dominican-American communities
(like New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico) were no more
likely than others to overstay their visas.

¶14. OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Some of the characteristics analyzed in the survey did not
appear to play significant roles in determining a visa
recipient's overstay rate. Four of these are elaborated
below:

SALARY: Salary information was entered into the case remarks
for about a third of the applicants selected. Among those,
applicants earning less than the equivalent of USD 1,000 per
month were about twice as likely (5.6%) to overstay their
visas than those earning more than the equivalent of USD
1,000 per month (2.6%) or those whose salaries had not been
recorded (3.6%).

GENDER: The difference between the overstay rates of men and
women was approximately 0.3%, well within the survey's margin
of error.

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP: There was virtually no difference
between the overstay rates of business owners and others.
However, in only 370 of the selected cases were the remarks
extensive enough to determine whether the selected visa
holders owned businesses.

REFUSAL RATE: There was little or no correlation between an
applicant's overstay rate and the individual officer who
interviewed him/her for the visa. Officers with higher
refusal rates fared similarly to those with lower ones.

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CONCLUSIONS
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¶15. The vast majority of Embassy's B1/B2 visa holders appear
to be using their visas appropriately. Even among the groups
revealed to be most at risk of overstaying their visas, it is
only a small minority that is actually doing so.
¶16. In some ways, survey results bear out common sense.
Young adults, particularly those who have never had visas,
appear to merit the additional scrutiny they receive.
Similar caution should continue to be exercised with respect
to single and childless applicants, while applicants who have
had previous visas have lower overstay rates.

¶17. Findings would appear to suggest that other groups
should be evaluated differently. Virtually no minor children
or middle-aged (46-69 year-old) applicants appeared to have
overstayed their visas. Married applicants, as well as
those with children, demonstrated similarly low overstay
rates. In contrast, the effect of an individual's salary on
his or her overstay rate appeared less significant. One way
to interpret these results could be that family and cultural

ties play stronger roles in the lives of Dominican applicants
than do economic ones, and should be evaluated accordingly.

¶18. Drafted by Alexander T. Bryan.

¶19. This report and extensive other material can be consulted
on our SIPRNET site,
http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/

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